

Navin Paneeri

Stories from the life of Guru Nanak Dev

Volume - 2



Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan

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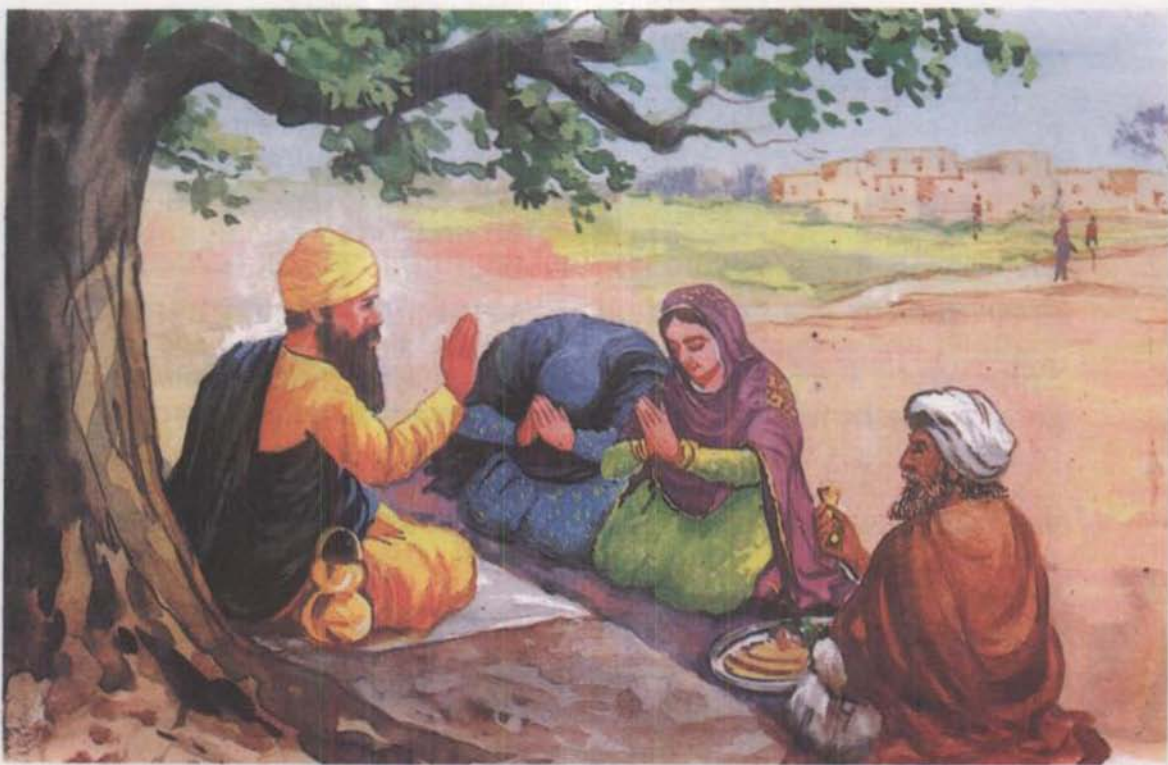
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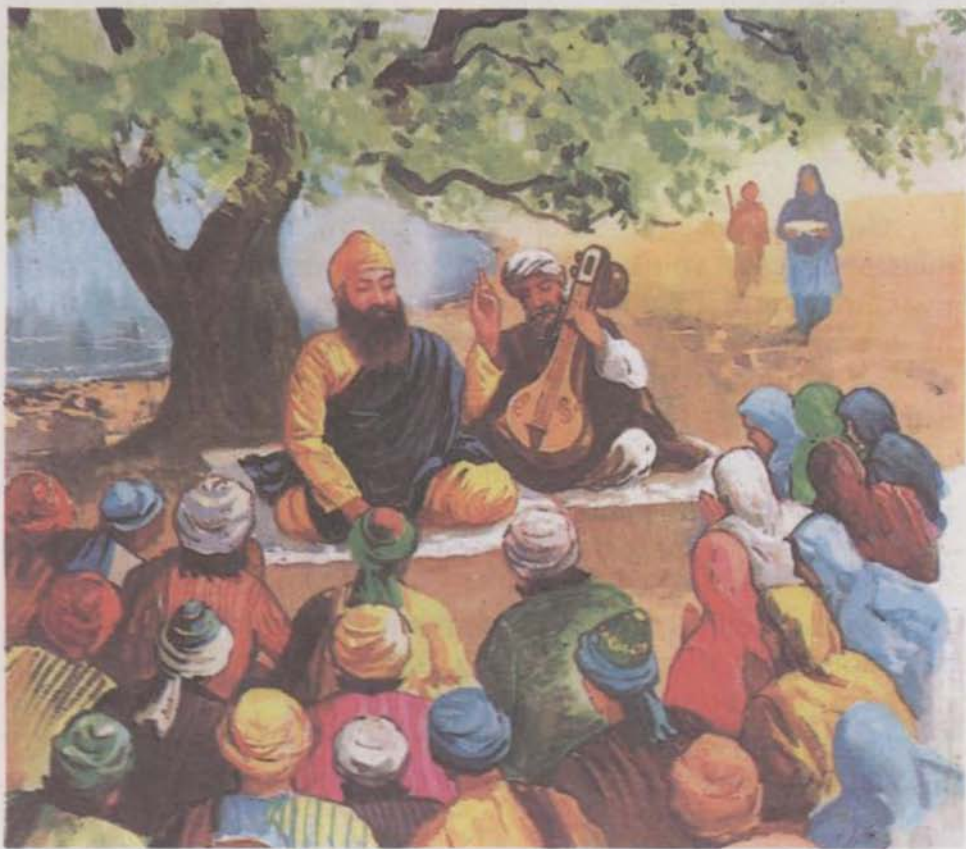
An Affectionate Offering

Guru Nanak left Sultan Pur alongwith Mardana on his mission to give spiritual comfort to the people. After crossing river Beas he reached Goindwal. He spent the first night of his travels under a tree. Then he went to Khadur and spent the second night under the open sky. Next day Mardana felt very hungry.

It so happened that Varai the wife of Chaudhry Meham passed that way. She was accompanied by another woman. She was attracted by the holy personality of the Guru and his sweet melodious Kirtan. She put her head at the feet of Guru Nanak. The moment her head touched his feet she felt a sweet sensation of bliss spreading through her body. She asked her friend to go to her home and bring food. Mardana said, "Lord, as I took this food, I thought of the food which my mother used to cook for me". Guru Nanak smiled. The same day the Guru left for Khadur.

Kirtan Under a Tree

Leaving Khadoor, Guru Nanak reached the place where the present city of Amritsar is situated. At that time a forest covered this area. In the middle of the forest there was a natural pond. The Guru sat under a tree on the edge of the pond. This tree is now called Dukh Bhanjni Ber (The Ber Tree which dispels sufferings). The Guru stayed here for a number of days. Every day kirtan (singing of hymns in praise of the Lord) was performed in the morning and evening. People from the neighbouring villages of Sultan Wind, Tung, Chati Wind and Khapar Kheri flocked there to listen to the Kirtan. It was here that the Guru started the practice of distributing Prasad at the end of the prayers. When Mardana asked him why he had started this practice, the Guru said, "A time will come when hymns will be sung here from morning to evening and Prasad will be distributed all the day". This prophesy came to be true.





Honest Livelihood

After staying in the forest for a few days, Guru Nanak left for Emnabad. He passed through the city of Lahore and reached Emnabad. In those days this city was known as Saidpur Sandiali. After the invasion of Babar it was renamed Emnabad. Straightaway the Guru went to the house of Bhai Lalo. It was a mud house. Bhai Lalo was a carpenter. He used to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. At the same time he used to meditate on God. He was a true devotee. He longed to see the true Guru. The Guru had the power to read the mind of human beings. At the door of Bhai Lalo, the Guru said, "Dhann Nirankar" (God is great). Bhai Lalo came out. The Guru said, "Bhai Lalo, I have come". Bhai Lalo felt blessed and fell at the Guru's feet. Respectfully he took the Guru in. Mardana was amazed. He could not understand why the Guru had come to the house of Bhai Lalo where one could not find even a cot or a stool".

Bhai Lalo brought a small cot. With great love and reverence he requested the Guru to sit. Bhai Lalo started cooking food. Mardana said to the Guru, "My Lord, who is this man? You have travelled a long way to pay him a visit". The Guru smiled and said, "We have come to the house of devotion. This man works hard to earn his bread and keeps his mind absorbed in meditation on God".

Bhai Lalo served the food which he had prepared. It consisted of loaves made of millet flour. Mardana thought it would be too difficult for him to chew such hard unbuttered loaves. However, on seeing the Guru relishing these loaves, he too started eating. It is a fact that he enjoyed the coarse food. As he ate he felt his mind was being saturated with bliss.

The Guru, after staying here for three days, thought of resuming his journey. Bhai Lalo requested him to stay for some more days. The Guru accepted his request.

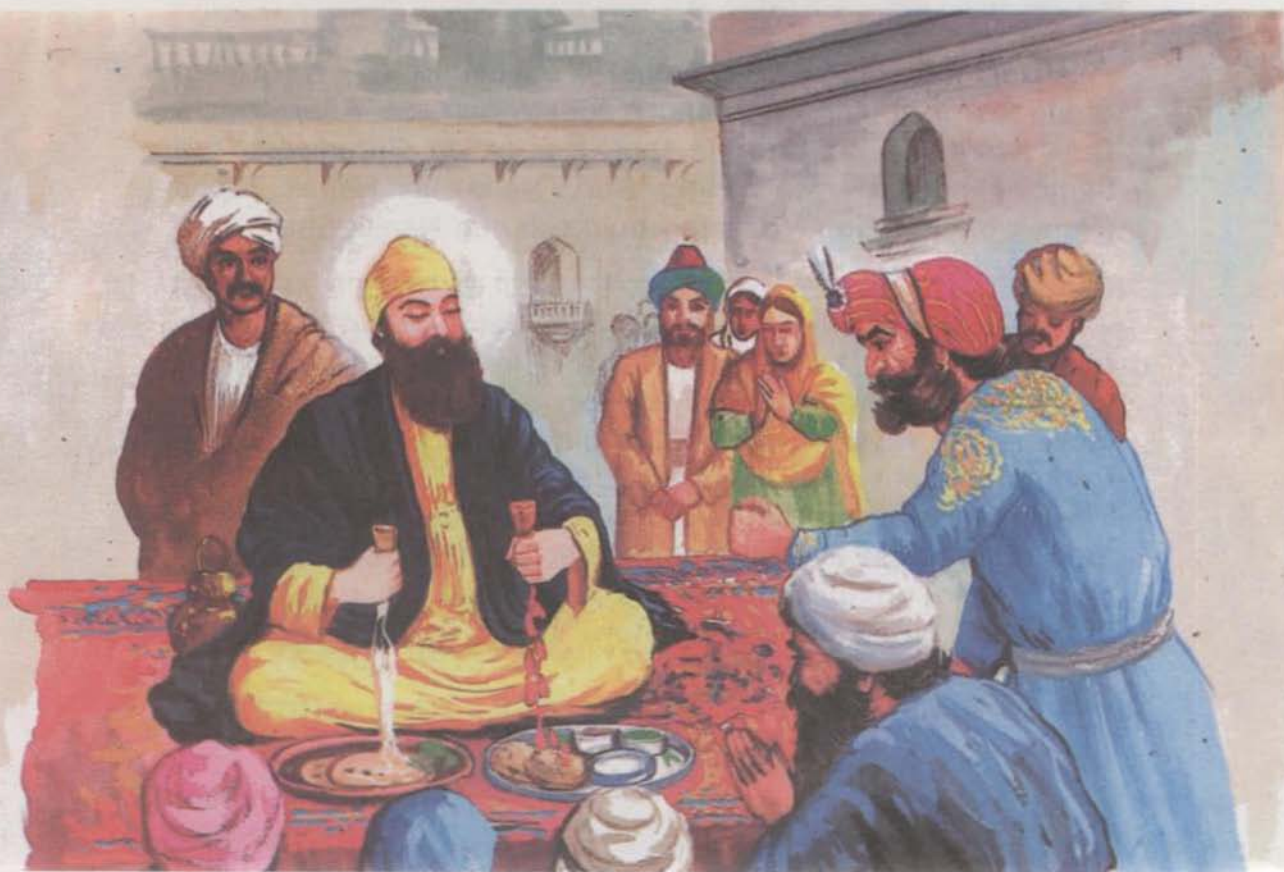


Every morning the Guru would go out of the city, sit on a heap of stones or a sand dune and meditate on God. Afterwards a Gurudwara was built at this spot. It is called Gurudwara Rori Sahib. Hindus started calling Guru Nanak as Nanak Tappa (Nanak the ascetic). Muslims would call him Nanak Shah.

Malik Bhago who was the Administrator under the Muslim ruler of Emnabad, held a feast. He got different types of delicious food prepared and invited all the holy men to the feast. He also invited Guru Nanak but the Guru did not accept his invitation. Irritated, he sent many persons to bring Guru Nanak to the feast. When the Guru came Malik Bhago said angrily, "You could take food at the house of a mere untouchable but did not come to my house even on invitation". The Guru said, "An untouchable drummer is my companion. Whatever God gives us, we eat". This

did not satisfy Malik Bhago. The Guru asked Bhai Lalo to bring from his home a loaf of millet. He also asked Malik Bhago to bring a fried loaf. Taking Bhai Lalo's loaf and Malik Bhago's fried loaf in each of his hands he squeezed these. It so happened that drops of milk came out of Bhai Lalo's loaf and drops of blood oozed from the delicious food offered by Malik Bhago. All those who had assembled there were amazed. Malik Bhago was angry but at the same time he felt ashamed of himself. Guru Nanak said to Malik Bhago, "Money earned through dishonest means and exploitation is like blood and money earned through honest means is pure milk. I can not accept the food bought with such money. This is the reason for my declining your invitation".

The Guru came back to the humble house of Bhai Lalo. The Hindus and Mulsims of Emnabad became devotees of Guru Nanak.





Faqirs Freed

While the Guru was staying at the house of Bhai Lalo another incident took place. It further increased Guru Nanak's reputation. The son of the Ruler of this city fell seriously ill. No physician could cure him. At last Malik Bhago said to him, "Approach some holy man. Prayers offered by such a man alone can cure your son". The Ruler ordered the arrest of all the holy men and said to them, "None of you will be set free till my son is cured". All the holy men were frightened.

Guru Nanak Dev smiled and said, "It is wrong to compel the holy men to bless your son. You will get their curses only. You



should set all the holy men free. Give to your son the left overs of the food taken by a holy man". The ruler gave to his son the left overs of the food taken by Bhai Lalo. His son recovered. He was overjoyed and became a devotee of the Guru.

The Guru said to him, "So long as you were proud of your power and wealth, no prayer could cure your son. When you gave up your pride and were ready to give to your son the left overs of a holy man's food, he was cured. By arresting these holy men you have insulted them. Apologise to them. Give them gifts and see them off respectfully".

It was for the second time that Malik Bhago had seen a miracle. He fell at Guru Nanak's feet. He was ashamed of himself. He had made another attempt to frighten the Guru. This was another victory for the Guru. He regretted his foolish mistakes. The Guru said to him, "It is a sin to hoard wealth by depriving others of their due. You are a ruler. You should not hoard money through dishonest means. Being a Ruler you should do justice to the people. You must acquire wealth through honest means only". The Guru spoke to Malik Bhago about divine matters and the significance of meditating on God. The Guru awakened his soul. He was enlightened. He distributed his ill-gotten wealth and himself became a devotee of the Guru. He started following the principles laid down by the Guru.

Mardana had already taken leave of the Guru and gone to Talwandi to meet the members of his family.

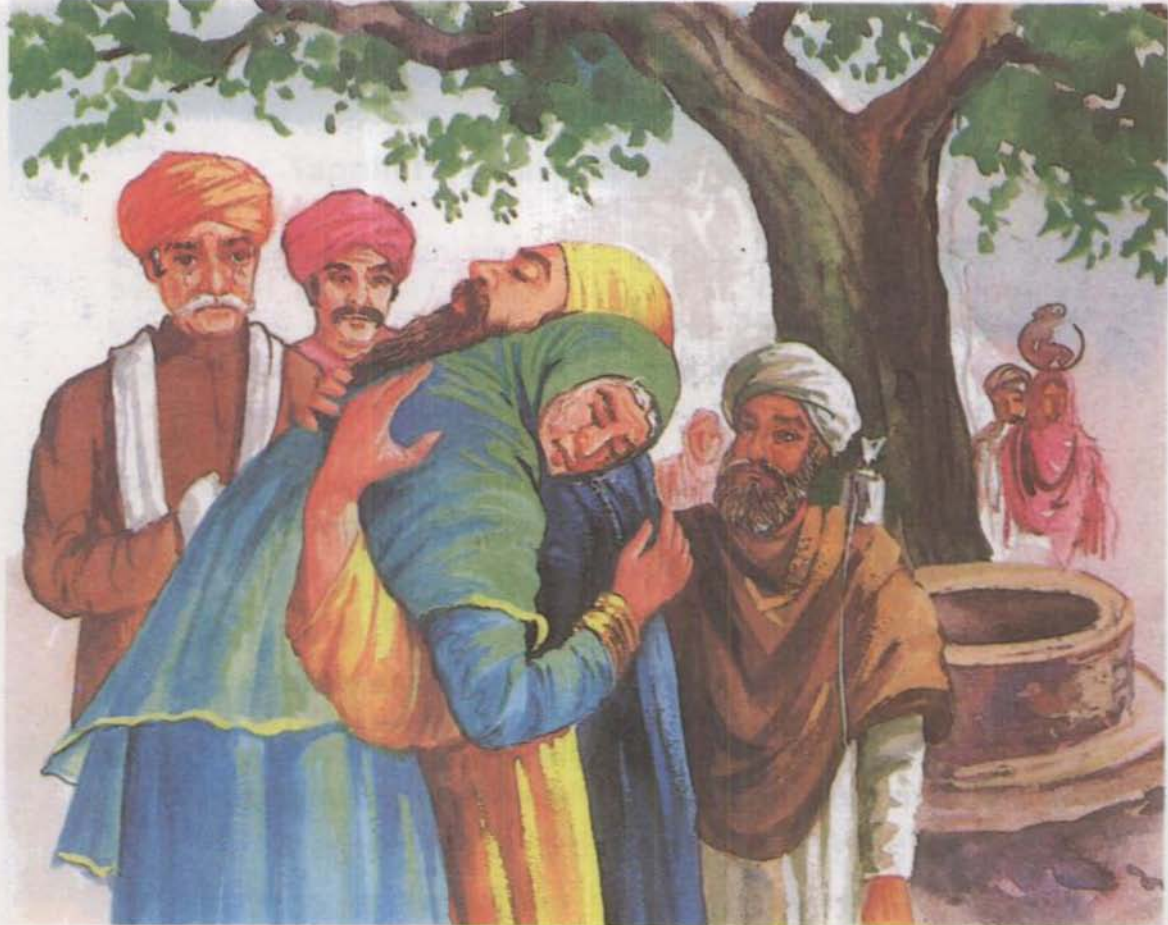


Guru Nanak's visit to Talwandi

The Guru spent ten days on his journey from Emnabad to Talwandi. On the way he addressed holy assemblies and told the people to follow the path of truth. Instead of going to his home, he stayed near a well. At once the news spread in the town that the son of Mehta Kalu Ram had become a holy man. When mother Tripta came to know of his arrival, she rushed to him. Holding Nanak she wept profusely. Mehta Kalu Ram and his brother Lalu Ram tried their hard to persuade the Guru to go to his home but the Guru did not agree.

Then a messenger came and told the Guru that Rai Bular wanted to see him. The Guru at once agreed to see him. The Guru said, "In fact I have come to see Rai Bular". When he went to the house of Rai Bular, he received him with great reverence. He seated the Guru on the cot and himself sat towards his feet. He talked to him for a while and then said, "How can a man get forgiveness from God".

The Guru said, "You have already been forgiven by the Almighty". Tears of love and devotion welled up in Rai Bular's eyes. He sat down on the ground and put his head at the Guru's feet. He sent his servant to call Soodhe Brahmin and asked him to prepare food and invited one and all to his house. He said to Guru Nanak, "Why do you go to far off places? You may wear the clothes of a holy man and still stay here. You will lack nothing. The whole of my land and my entire property is at your disposal. Use it as you please".



The Guru said, "I will do what the Almighty wills. I will go where He wishes me to go. I will stay where he wishes me to stay". Rai Bular understood that the Guru would not stay there. He entreated him to stay there for a few days more. He asked him to go to his house for the sake of the members of his family. The Guru willingly accepted this request.

The Guru would stay under the trees at night. During the day he would visit different places. He would take the food prepared by his mother. He liked to bathe in a tank. There was none at Talwandi. Rai Bular got a tank dug at Talwandi. This tank has now been converted into a sarovar. The Guru stayed at Talwandi for some days and then set on his journey once again.

Why carry unnecessary Things?

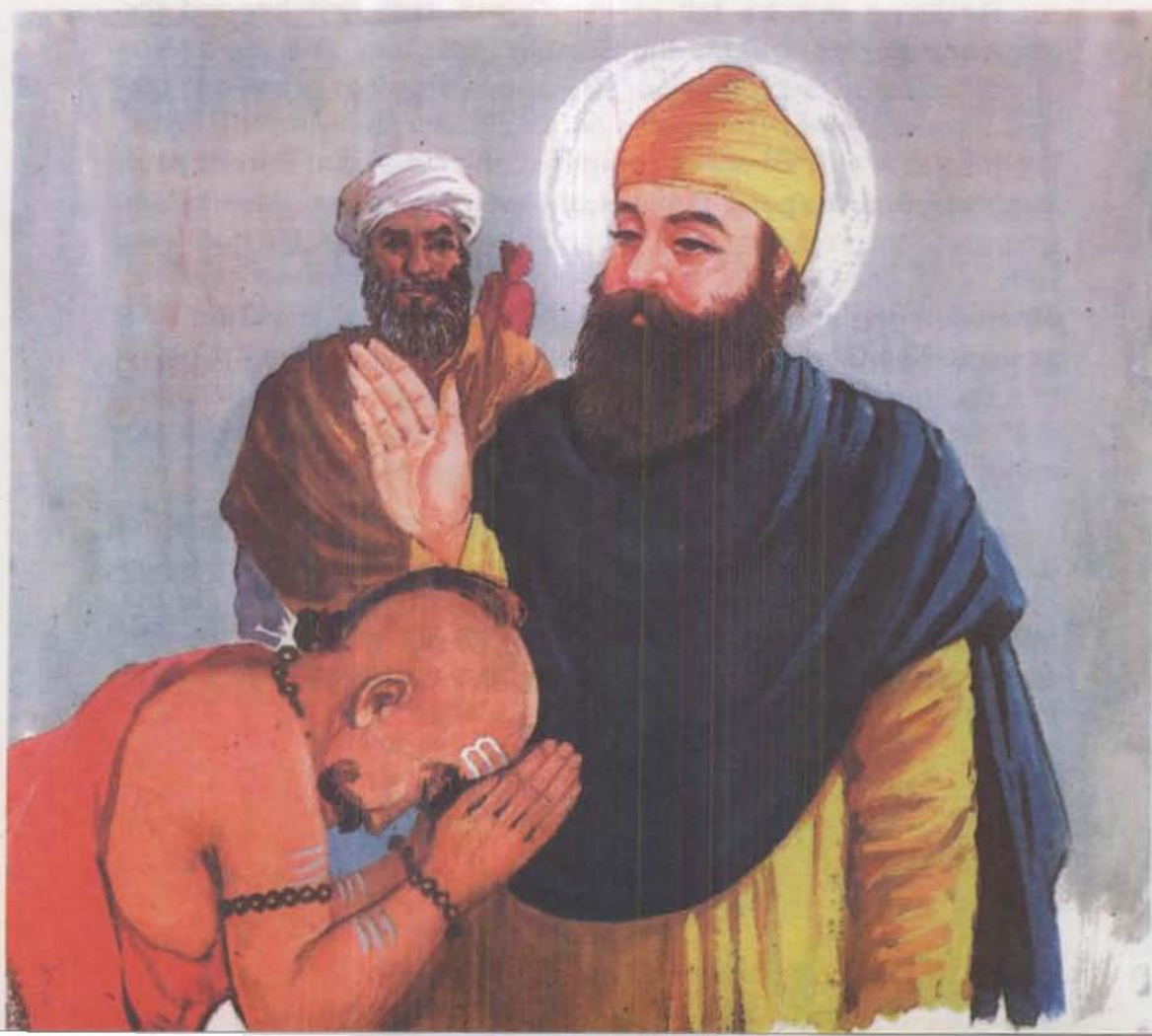
After passing through forests, crossing rivers and travelling through deserted places, the Guru reached Harappa. He camped under a tree outside the city. He asked Mardana to go to the city but told him not to ask the people for anything. He said, "People will recognise you and place things at your service". Mardana just could not believe his ears. But when he went to the city people gave him many clothes and gold coins. Mardana was overjoyed. However, some people did not take any notice of him. Their indifference made Mardana unhappy.

He put all the gifts in a bundle and came to the Guru. The Guru said, "What for have you brought this bundle? These things are of no use to us. Throw away the bundle". Obeying the Guru's orders, Mardana threw the bundle away. He had understood that it was of no use to carry unnecessary things.



Sajjan the Deceiver, reformed

Leaving Harappa Guru Nanak travelled to Tulambha. There was a big haveli (house) on the outskirts of the city. A temple and a mosque had been built in its premises. This was an inn owned by Sajjan. He would impress upon travellers that he was a pious man. He showed them great courtesy and hospitality. He would keep a rosary in his hand turn its beads. When the travellers retired for rest, he would rob them of their valuables, kill them and throw the dead bodies in a near by well. The Guru knew fully well the misdeeds of Sajjan, yet he stayed in his inn. Sajjan showed great respect to the Guru. He thought that the bundle which the Guru



carried contained diamonds and jewels. He thought that the Guru was a rich and a powerful man.

Guru Nanak kept awake till late in the night. Twice Sajjan came and said, "It is almost midnight. Please go to bed now. I have spread beautiful beddings for you". The Guru said, "We shall go to bed after singing a hymn". The Guru asked Mardana to play on the rebeck and himself started singing a hymn. As Sajjan listened to the hymn he realised that he had committed many sins. He felt ashamed of his character and conduct. He thought, 'This man is not a rich trader. He is God Himself in human form.'

Realising this he fell at the Guru's feet and begged for forgiveness. He entreated the Guru to bless him. The Guru said, "God can forgive you for your sins and bestow His grace on you. You should repent for your sins and become an honest man. Promise that you shall not commit such sins again. Return your ill-gotten wealth to the families of those whom you have killed. Distribute the rest among the needy and the poor. Do not keep with you the wealth gathered through dishonest means, otherwise you shall come to grief". Sajjan did as the Guru had advised. The Guru said, "Now you shall have peace of mind. Make this mosque and temple centres of true religion. You shall lack nothing. Meditate on God and work hard to earn your bread. Your mind will be at peace. It will stop going astray".

In this way the Guru reformed Sajjan and turned him into a religious man. He became the Guru's disciple and spent the rest of his life meditating on God. He started earning his livelihood through honest means.

A Muslim Holy Man redeemed

After turning Sajjan the deceiver into a devotee of the Lord, Guru Nanak set on his journey once again. The Guru travelled for three days and reached a village. A Pir (Muslim holy man) was harassing the people of that village. He did not allow them to build rooms on their first floors. The Guru camped under a tree outside the village. When the Guru sang hymns the people of the village were fascinated and came to listen to the divine music. They felt that they had been blessed. The presence of the Guru in the village irritated the Pir. His sense of pride was injured. He came to the Guru and said, "From where have you come and where shall you go?" The Guru said, "The wind blows from one direction and moves to the other. God has ordained that I should roam like the



wind". The Pir again said, "I hear, you intend to build a room on the first floor? Do you?" "A wandering hermit" the Guru said, "Lives in the mansion of God. I do not know whether I shall build a room or demolish one". The Guru told the Pir, "Man is made of clay. Therefore he loves it. Soul resides in human body. This is why our body has some worth. But we neither love our soul nor value it. We love that which does not last".

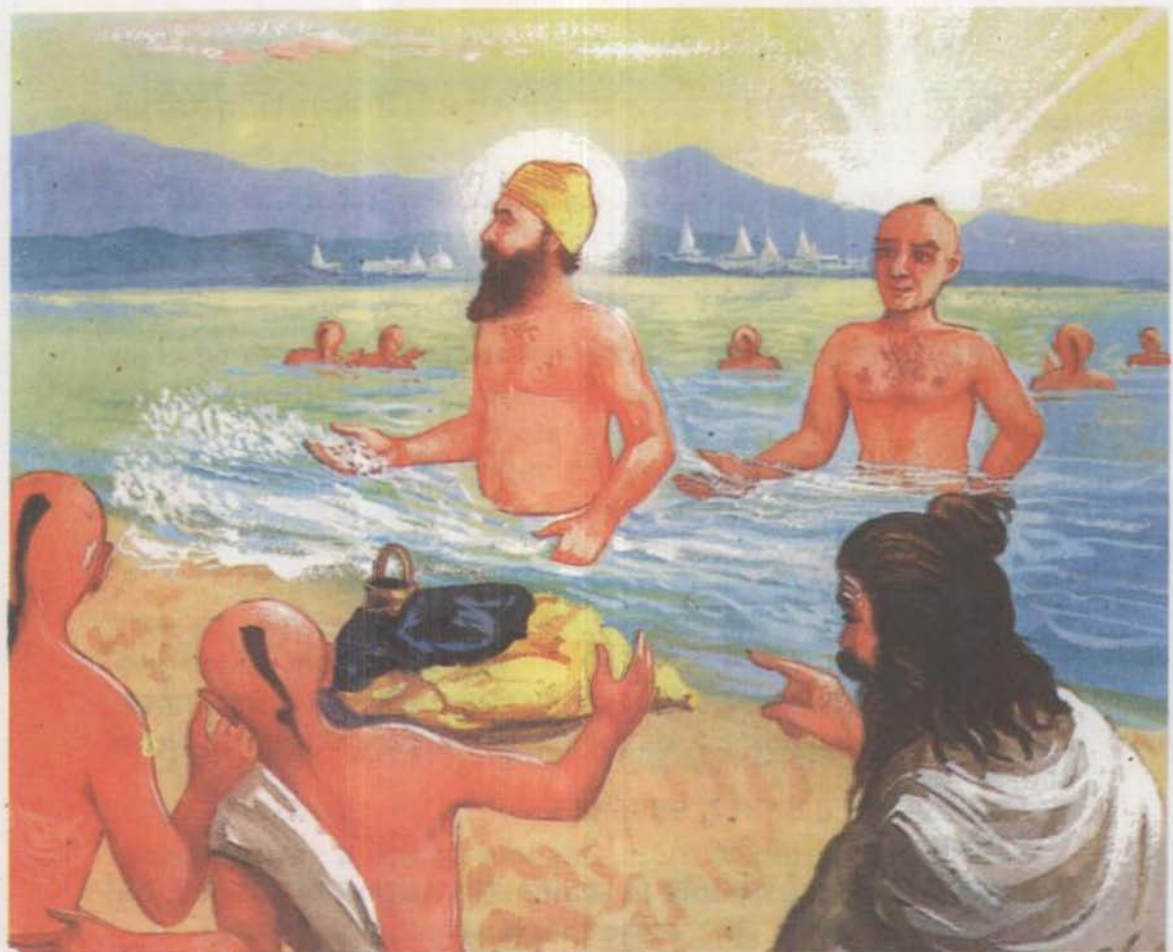
The Guru continued, "Why are you proud of your attic? When you breathe your last and the soul leaves your body none shall allow you to reside in it. They won't even allow you to live on the earth. A deep grave shall be dug to bury your dead body. You have never tried to know how shall your soul enter the presence of God? Of what value shall your pride be to you after your death? Those who love clay are claimed by it".

Guru Nanak's words were full of love, wisdom and truth. The Pir felt enlightened. He felt that the light of true knowledge had illumined his mind. He realised that he had been following a wrong path. He requested the Guru to stay in the village for a few days. In fact he had come to turn the Guru out of the village. But he became his devotee. Guru Nanak stayed there for some more days. The Pir was a haughty man. By the grace of Guru Nanak he gave up his pride. He understood the real meanings of life. In the company of the Guru he realised, "All men are created by God. All human beings are His children. He who loves God can never trouble his fellow men. God can never be happy with those who make human beings unhappy".

Just as Sajjan the deceiver, had become a true devotee of God and a servant of mankind, this Pir who used to frighten and harass other people, became a true Pir. By showing the true path to the Pir, the Guru did a favour to the people of the village who had suffered a lot at the hands of the Pir.

Guru Nanak at Hardwar

Hardwar is a centre of pilgrimage on the banks of river Ganges. People from all over the country go to Hardwar. It is believed that a dip in the river washes away our sins. Guru Nanak went to Hardwar to show to the people the path of truth. He went to the bank of the river early in the morning. People were bathing and offering water to the rising Sun so that it could reach their ancestors. The Guru also stood in the river. He turned his back to the river. He turned his back to the East. He started splashing water towards the West just as others were throwing water towards the East.



People were amazed. They approached him and said, "Splash water to the East". The Guru looked at them with eyes full of pity and said, "Why do you throw water to the East?" Many men spoke together and said, "We splash water to the East so that it reaches our ancestors". Another person said, "We are giving water to the Sun".

The Guru said calmly, "How far is the Sun? Where do your ancestors live?"

An old man said at once, "Sun is millions of miles away. So are our ancestors. But why are you splashing water towards the West?"

"I have my fields on the banks of river Ravi. This year it has not rained. If water reaches my fields, my crops will be saved", said Guru Nanak.

People laughed. They just could not understand. A wise old man said, "The handful of water which you throw goes back to the river. How can it reach your fields".

The Guru smiled and said, "If the water you send to Sun can reach your ancestors why shall the water sent by me not reach my fields which are only three hundred miles away". Everyone understood the futility of sending water to the ancestors. A wise man said, "This man is God Himself. He has come to enlighten us".

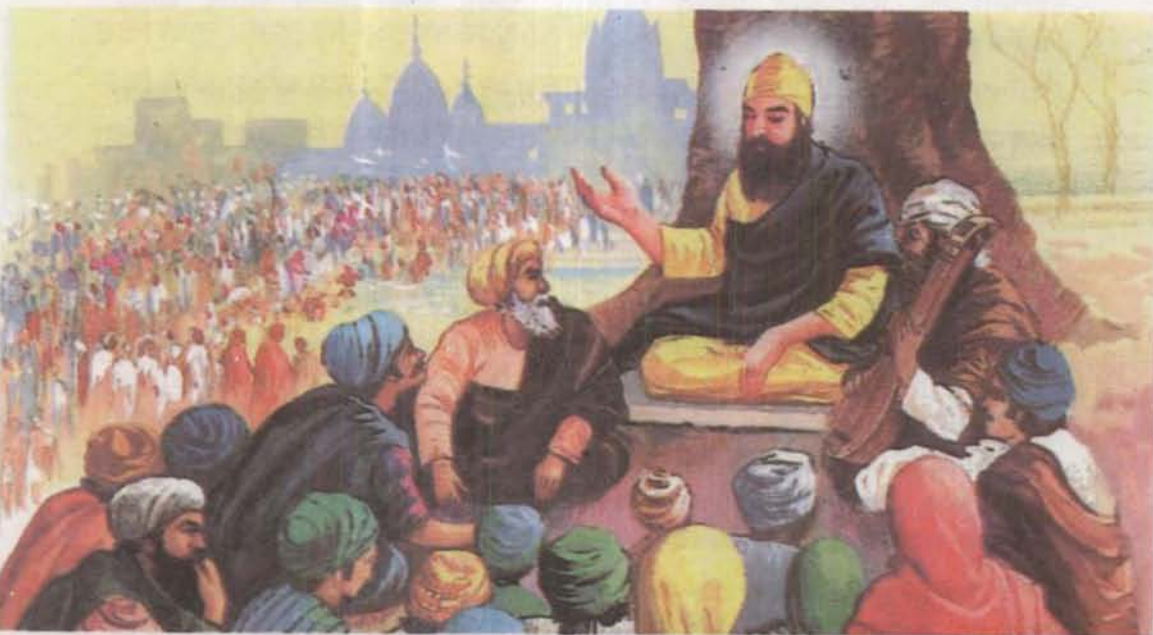
Thus the Guru showed the path of truth to the people who had gathered on the banks of Ganges. He taught them how to love God. He also told them that God loves those who earn their livelihood through honest means, follow the path of truth and love their fellow-men.

Guru Nanak loved truth. He was opposed to hypocrisy. Wherever he found people following the path of falsehood, he showed to them the path of truth and virtue.

Solar Eclipse at Kurukshetra

After leaving Hardwar Guru Nanak went to Kurukshetra. It was the day of Solar eclipse. People in large numbers had gathered there. In those days people had wrong ideas about Solar and Lunar eclipse. They believed that on such occasions Moon and Sun are attacked by demons and this attack can be averted if people take bath in the holy rivers and give money in charity. In order to tell the people that these ideas are not true, the Guru went to Kurukshetra when a fair on the day of Solar eclipse was being held there. The Guru set up camp at an open space outside the city and started singing hymns. Mardana played the rebeck and accompanied the Guru in singing.

It so happened that the Ruler of Hansi and his queen passed that way. He had been driven out of his kingdom by his opponents. He had come to Kurukshetra to get the blessings of some holy man. He sat near the Guru and listened to the kirtan. As he sat there and looked at the divine face of Guru and listened to the kirtan he was convinced that the Guru was a holy man with great spiritual power. On his way to Kurukshetra, the ruler had



hunted a deer. He too halted there and asked his attendants to cook its meat.

People consider it a sin to cook when the Sūn is under eclipse. Cooking meat at pilgrim centres is considered to be an unpardonable sin. When the priests saw the smoke rising from the cooking fire they raised a hue and cry. When they learnt that meat was being cooked they were very angry. They gathered a large number of people and led them to attack and kill such a sinner. As the cooking was being done near the place where the Guru was singing they thought that he was the culprit. They abused the Guru and threatened to kill him. The Guru spoke to them gently and said, "If it is a sin to cook the flesh of a deer during Solar eclipse how can killing a man be an act of piety? If killing an animal is a sin, killing a man cannot be a virtue". Guru's answer silenced them.

The Guru said, "If you want to discuss the issue, ask Pandits, Scholars and Sanyasis to come here". Many Pandits were called. One of them was pandit Nanoo. He called himself Nanak. The debate on eating non-vegetarian food started. Large number of people stood there, listening to the debate. It was argued that the scriptures forbade meat eating. Our ancestors took only vegetarian food.

The Guru said, "Your holy books say that animals were killed and their flesh offered as sacrifice to fire. Aryans ate flesh. When marriage feasts are held in Kshatri houses, goats are slaughtered and non-vegetarian food is served. Why do you accept charity from those who are meat eaters?"

The Guru did not say whether one should eat non-vegetarian food. He simply opposed hypocrisy. We should not do one thing and say the other. There should be no difference between our words and deeds. The Guru made his point of view clear. He said, "We should not eat the food which harms the body, makes it sick and leads mind astray. Only that food is good which keeps the body healthy and the mind pure".

The principle laid down by the Guru in this respect is such as can be adopted by people in any country. By following this principle all can lead a happy life.

Guru Nanak at Panipat

From Kurukshetra Guru Nanak went to Panipat. He stayed near a well, outside the city. He began to sing hymns. In those days a Muslim holy man Pir Sharaf used to live at Panipat. His disciple Sheikh Tahir passed that way. Fascinated by the Kirtan, he stopped at the well to listen to the Kirtan. He thought that Guru Nanak was a Muslim Pir and saluted him in the manner of a Muslim. Instead of responding to his salute in the Muslim way, the Guru said, "My salutation to the Formless God". Sheikh Tahir was surprised. He went to his master and told him, "A Faqir is camping near the well. He talks in a strange manner and his way of responding to our salute is also strange". The Pir said, "He seems to be a great man. Let us go to see him".

Both of them went to the well. The Pir saluted the Guru. He got the same response as was given to his disciple. The Pir asked only one question, "Who is the real saint?" The Guru said, "The real saint is the man who shuns evil actions. He does not hurt the feelings of others. He is never angry and always remembers God. The real saint knows what rightly belongs to him and does not deprive others of their due".

The Pir kissed the Guru's hand and said, "You have realised God." He went to the city and told people that a Pir was camping outside the city. People in large numbers went to see the Guru. Guru Nanak explained to them the real purpose of life.



Miracle at Delhi

Guru Nanak reached Delhi. He set up his camp under a tree near village Timarpur and Chandrawal on the banks of river Jamuna. This place was close to the abode of a Muslim Faqir, Majnu. Ibrahim Lodhi's Hathikhana (stable for elephants) was situated nearby. The Guru heard many people crying. He sent Mardana to find out what was the matter. Mardana came back and told the Guru that the Mahavat, the attendant of an elephant and the members of their families were weeping at the death of the elephant. The Guru said, "Why do you weep. The elephant belonged to the King". Those people said to the Guru, "the king would be angry with us. We will lose our livelihood." The Guru took pity on them. He told them to utter Waheguru and caress the face of the elephant. The Mahavat did as he was told and the

elephant came back to life. The people living in the Hathikhana came and fell at the feet of the Guru.

This news spread through out the city. Ibrahim Lodhi also came to know of it. He ordered that the elephant which had come to life should be brought to him. Riding that very elephant he went to pay a visit to the Guru. He got down and saluted Guru Nanak. He said to the Guru, "Holy man, did you bring the elephant back to life?" The Guru said, "God alone can give us life and take it back. Man is powerless. When the holy men pray to Him He shows mercy".

The king said, "Kill the elephant and bring it back to life." Guru Nanak told the king that God alone has the power to give life to people. He alone can kill them. He alone can bring them back to life. None else has that power. All are helpless. Everyone must obey his orders. The king was satisfied. He thought that the Guru had achieved spiritual perfection and had realised God.

With great humility the king said, "I wish to present gold coins and other valuable things to you. Will you be kind enough to accept these?"

The Guru uttered a sloka which said, "My only desire is to see the Almighty. I desire neither wealth nor other valuables. I wish to be absorbed in love of God". These words of the Guru further convinced Ibrahim Lodhi that Guru Nanak had realised God.

At the place where the Guru had stayed, now stands a beautiful Gurudwara known as Majnu Ka Tilla. Even today the waves of the river flow by of the walls of this Gurudwara.

Secret of good Health

From Delhi Guru Nanak and Mardana started travelling towards the East. After walking for a few days they broke their journey in a grove of trees. Next day at noon they saw a planquin. It was being carried by six persons. They stopped and put the planquin under a tree. A Pir alighted from it. His attendants spread a sheet over the grass. The Pir lay down. All of them started pressing his arms and legs to remove his tiredness.

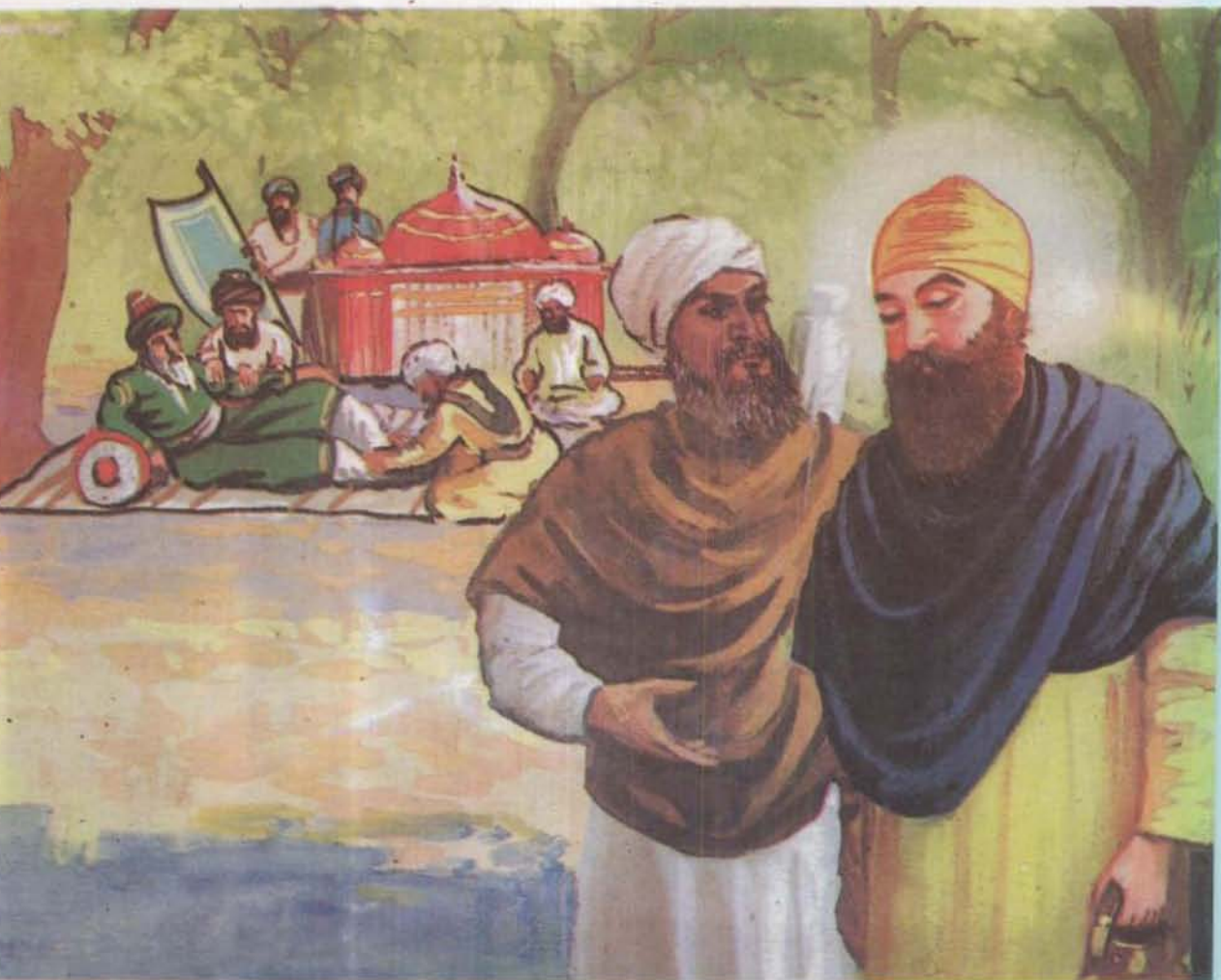
Mardana was surprised. He said to the Guru, "What is all this? The one who had been sitting in the planquin is tired and the men who carried the planquin are not tired. They are pressing the Pir's body to take away his tiredness".

Guru Nanak smiled and said, "Those who remain active have good appetite. They are able to digest what they eat. They have strong and healthy bodies. Those who do not work and just keep on sitting lose their appetite. If they over eat they are not able to digest. They get tired very soon".

Mardana could not understand what the Guru had said. He said again, "This Pir does not appear to be sick. He has not even walked. I cannot understand why does he feel tired?" The Guru laughed and said, "The Pir is tired for two reasons. In his previous life he has been practising penance and austerities to get the power to perform miracles. Owing to the good deeds of his previous life he has become a Pir during this life. People know him as a Pir. He has become lazy and does nothing. He does not

even walk. As he had given up work, his body has become feeble. He gets tired even while sitting in the planquin.

This is the plight of a man who has gone astray. If he loves God and works for the welfare of the people both his body and mind will remain healthy. He will be successful in his life and after his death go to the land of Bliss".



Guru Nanak at Gorakhmatta

During these travels Guru Nanak arrived at Gorakhmata in the area where Nainital is situated. It was a big centre of ascetics and Yogis who were the disciples of Gorakh Nath. Under all the green trees the Yogis had lit fires. Spirals of smoke rose from these fires. The Guru sat under a withered tree. When it was evening, the Guru said to Mardana, "Go to the Yogis and get some fire wood from them so that we may also keep off the cold and spend the night".



Mardana went to the Yogis but none of them gave him fire wood. They spoke to him harshly. Mardana felt insulted and irritated. He came to the Guru and related the whole story. The Guru told him not to be angry. "Anger is bad for health. God himself will help you", the Guru said.

A miracle took place. The withered tree under which Guru Nanak had been sitting, became green once again. Leaves started sprouting on it. The sadhus and Yogis were convinced that the Guru was not an ordinary person. He was the messenger of God. They came to the Guru and said, "Who is your Guru?" The Guru smiled and said, "Akal Purkash (God) is my Guru. HE is All Powerful".

The Yogis said, "Why don't you become a Yogi? Why don't you put on our robes?" The Guru explained the real meaning of Yoga and said, "He is the real Yogi who takes part in the activities of life while remembering God. One does not become a Yogi by merely wearing the robes of a Yogi. You become a true Yogi if you give up lust, anger, attachment, greed and pride". All the Yogis agreed that the Guru had realised God. They bowed to the Guru. The people in the surrounding areas came to know that Guru Nanak was a great saint. A memorial was raised in his honour. Gorakhmatta was renamed Nanakmatta.



Soap Nuts turned sweet

Guru Nanak left Gorakhmatta. The forest around Gorakhmatta was very dense. It was infested with dangerous wild animals. After travelling for about forty miles into the forest, the Guru halted at a place. He asked Mardana to play on the rebeck and started singing hymns. He stayed there for a whole day.

The next day Mardana said, "I am very hungry. We should go to some inhabited place". The Guru pointed to a tree and said, "Go, pluck the fruit of that tree". With folded hands Mardana said, "It is a tree on which soap nuts grow. Soap nuts are bitter. How can I eat these? Even if I take these I shall not be able to digest these. My stomach will be upset".

The Guru smiled and said, "Just try. How can you know the taste and effect of this fruit without even eating it?" Obeying the Guru, Mardana plucked soap nuts and started eating these. To his surprise the soap nuts tasted sweet and delicious. He ate to his fill and took some with him for eating during the next journey.

The followers of Guru Nanak set up a Gurudwara on this spot. The fruit of the other soap nut trees on this spot is bitter. Only one tree yields sweet soap nuts. This tree is still there and the Sikhs who visit this Gurdwara enjoy its sweet soap nuts.

Pandit Chattur Das became a Disciple

During the course of his travels through the present Uttar Pradesh, Guru Nanak reached Banaras. He camped on the outskirts of the city on the banks of the river Ganges. He started singing Hymns. One day a learned Pandit Chattur Das passed that way. He saw the Guru and said to him, "You appear to be a sadhu but you have not placed any idol before you. You do not wear even a necklace of holy beads. It appears that you have not yet learnt the ways of a sadhu".

The Guru smiled and said, "I worship the God who is formless. He does not have a definite form. How can an image of God be made? It is not good to worship idols. We should shun bad deeds. So long as our actions are bad our thoughts are evil and we pay attention to evil things we cannot meditate on God. God is pleased with those who meditate on Him".

The words of Guru Nanak had a deep effect on Pandit Chattur Das. He became a disciple of the Guru. He placed his forehead at the Guru's feet and said, "I thought that you had deviated from the true path. I wanted to guide you to follow the proper path. Now I realise that I myself had gone astray. You have shown me the path of truth and virtue".

Later on Pandit Chattur Das organised the disciples of the Guru at Banaras.





Guru Nanak at Patna

Patna is the capital of Bihar. During the course of his travels in the East the Guru reached Patna. He camped under a shady tree outside the city on the banks of the river. It was evening. After singing hymns Mardana went to sleep without taking dinner. The singing of hymns began once again at dawn. After the singing of hymns, Mardana said to the Guru, "I have been hungry since yesterday. Let us go to the city. There I shall get something to eat".

Guru Nanak looked at Mardana. Pointing to a shining pebble he said, "Take this precious stone to the city. Sell it to a Jeweller

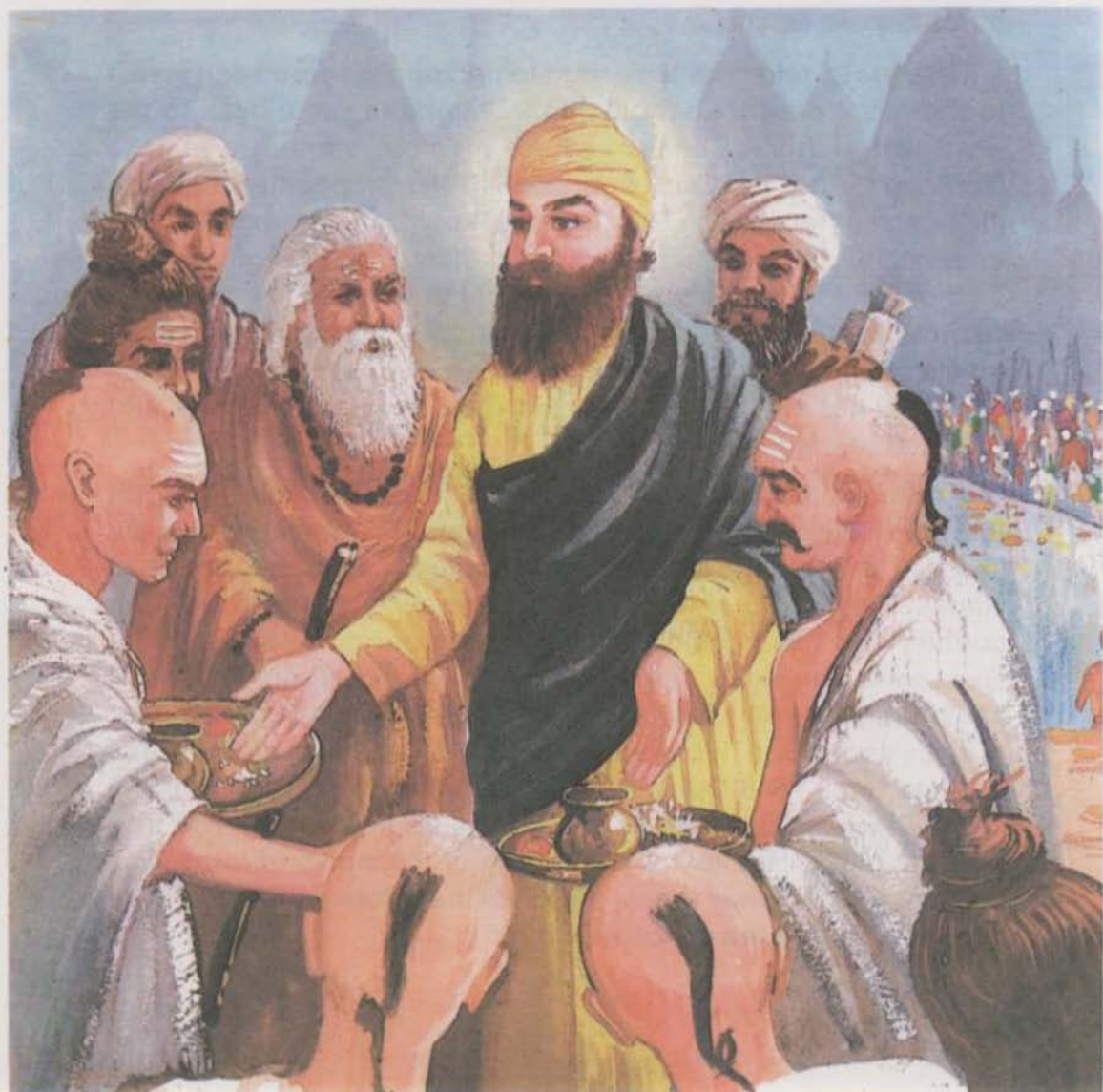
and buy some eatables with the money". Mardana realised that whatever the Guru said had deeper meanings. He took the stone to the city to sell it there. At first he approached a green grocer. He would give him only one radish for the precious stone. He then took it to a cloth merchant. He thought that the value of the precious stone was just a piece of hand woven cloth. A sweet meat seller was willing to part with one sweet for the precious stone. At last he went to a jeweller named Salas Rai. He said, "This ruby is very precious. None can fix its price exactly. My elders have told me that on seeing such a rare diamond one should give at least one hundred rupees to the owner of the diamond. He presented one hundred rupees to Mardana. Mardana said, "The owner of this diamond will not accept this gift. I have to sell it and purchase provisions".

Salas Rai told his accountant to get food prepared and take it to the place described by Mardana. Mardana came back to the Guru with hundred rupees and the precious stone. He put the diamond before the Guru and said, "Different people value this diamond differently". The Guru said, "Only a jeweller can understand the real worth of this diamond. For others this diamond is just a plaything." He sent Mardana back to the city to return hundred rupees to the jeweller. The Guru said, "We have no claim on this money. Why should we keep something with us which is not rightfully ours". Mardana went to the city and returned the money.

Adhraka the accountant of the jeweller came to the Guru with the food which he had got cooked. When Mardana went to the jeweller to return the money, he too came to pay homage to Guru Nanak. He bowed to the Guru in reverence and said, "Which country you have come from? What is your good name?" The Guru smiled and said, "I am from the country of Nirankar (God). I am Nirankari—the follower of God". His second question was, "Tell us about God. Why can't I see God pervading every where as you see Him?" The Guru's reply was, "In the water blossoms the lotus. Blackish green grass also grows on its surface. The frog eats the grass. He has no knowledge of the worth of lotus. The fragrance of a flower draws the black bee from a distance. It all depends on how we perceive things".

Dialogue with Dev Giri

Guru Nanak left Patna. Passing through many cities and towns he arrived at Gaya. Near this city of Pilgrimage there is a town called Rajgiri. People used to go there to pray for the salvation of their ancestors. There is a custom according to which balls of flour are made and given in charity to the priests alongwith other valuables. When Guru Nanak reached this town the Priests thought that he had gone there to get deliverance for his ancestors and perform charities.



The Guru listened to them and smiled. He said, "I have already taken such steps as have brought salvation to myself and my ancestors. We have lit the lamp of Lord's Name. It has dispelled the darkness of ignorance. Don't mislead people. Tell all that God is within us. He is always with us, and loves us. Let us also love Him. Heaven and Hell are created by our ignorance. Don't think that our bad actions will not be pardoned by God. Just as a little fire burns a pile of wood, God's name destroys all our sins. Unite people with God. Do not lead them astray. For your self interest do not give such ideas to the people as mislead them. Try to be worthy of God's grace. Your life shall become fruitful".

The priests listened to these words of wisdom and divine knowledge. They felt blessed. All of them agreed that the path shown by the Guru can unite men with God.

Guru Nanak Dev reached Bodh Gaya. It was here that Mahatma Buddha had received enlightenment after a long penance. Here too, the Guru sat under a tree outside the city. The people of the city were drawn to him by his melodious singing of hymns. The most important religious leader of the town Dev Giri came to see Guru Nanak. He was a learned man and a recluse. He held a discussion with the Guru. The Guru told him, "Don't destroy your senses. Don't suppress your mind. Shun evil actions. Don't allow your mind to stray into evil thoughts. Bad qualities must be given up and good qualities must be adopted. Don't suppress the feelings of love. Direct your feelings of love to God".

This meeting with the Guru enlightened Dev Giri. He became a disciple of the Guru. The Guru stayed with him for a number of days. He dedicated his life to the propagation of Guru's message in Bihar.

Shepherd made a King

Guru Nanak and Mardana left Gaya on their onward journey. They reached Rajoli and went to the residence of Faqir Jallan Shah. He wished to see the Guru. By paying a visit to him the Guru fulfilled his long felt desire. When they set on their journey again they came across a field in which gram grew abundantly. A young man who was a shepherd was roasting green gram in a corner of the field. Mardana felt like eating gram. He requested the Guru to take him to the field. Both of them sat on the fence of the field. The shepherd thought that the Guru was a holy man. At once he became a devotee of the Guru.

He brought for the Guru the grams which he had roasted. He met the Guru with great reverence. Mardana took the roasted gram. The shepherd said, "Please stay here awhile. I shall go to my home and bring food for you. You can leave after taking the food". The Guru said, "Your love is like delicious food for us. When he insisted on bringing food for the Guru, the Guru said, "O King, don't go today, stay here".

What the Guru had said, proved to be correct. There was a change in the political conditions of that area and the shepherd became the king. Even after becoming the king he would call himself the servant of the Guru.

Coins turned into Coals

Guru Nanak and Mardana reached a town. The rainy season had set in. On the request of Mardana the Guru agreed to stay in an old hut outside the city. This place was situated at a distance of one and a half miles from the city. As kshatri lived in that city. He was a devotee of God. He heard that a holy man was staying in a hut. He sang hymns in a melodious voice. He enjoyed the Kirtan performed by the Guru so much that he would go to the Guru every day. He learnt to absorb himself in meditation on God. The Guru bestowed on him the blessing of remembering God.



A shop keeper of that village said to the kshatri, "Where do you go every day". The Kshatri told the shop keeper "A holy man is staying in the old house. I go to listen to the hymns sung by him". The shop keeper followed him but he took to another path and met a group of men. They tempted him into evil ways. He started visiting these people every day.

They met again after sometime. The Kshatri said that he liked to listen to the Kirtan and the words of wisdom spoken by the holy man. The shop keeper said that he liked the company of those evil men much more. They decided to meet each other at a fixed place and find out who was happier of the two. The shop keeper reached that place earlier than the Kshatri. As he had nothing to do he started digging the place. He found a gold coin. Greedy as he was, he continued digging and found a pitcher. It was, however full of coals. In the meanwhile the Kshatri also reached that spot. A thorn had pierced his foot. He was limping. The shop keeper said, "You get gold coins by following my path but thorns prick you when you follow your path. Why is it so?" They came to Guru Nank to solve this riddle.

The Guru smiled and said to The shop keeper, "in your previous life you had given one gold coin to some body for some good work. That gold coin multiplied into many coins but owing to your bad deeds these coins were turned into coal. Only that gold coin is of use to you". Addressing the Khatri the Guru said "Owing to your evil actions in the previous birth, you were to be sentenced to death and hanged but you became a devotee of God and started loving Him. That punishment got reduced to the pricks of thorns". Both of them fell at the feet of the Guru.

Encounter with Deceivers

During the course of travel Guru Nank and Mardana were surrounded by a gang of deceivers. They were asked to hand over to them all that they had otherwise they would be killed. The Guru said, "We have nothing for you. If you so desire you can kill us. But before you kill us bring fire from somewhere and after killing us cremate our bodies properly so that our dead bodies do not rot".

A deceiver said, "From where should we bring the fire?" You are very clever. You want to run away when we go to fetch fire", another deceiver said.

"See, a dead body is being cremated at a distance. You can bring fire from there", the Guru said calmly. They did as they were told and went to the pyre to bring fire. Near the burning dead body they came across two spirits in human form. The deceivers said to them, "Earlier you were not here. From where have you come?"

Those spirits said, "The dead body which is being cremated is the body of an evil man. He was to be sent to hell. But a holy man cast his glance towards this dead body. The man whom you want to kill is the holy man who has got the sins of this evil man pardoned." The deceivers came back and fell at the feet of the Guru, who at that time was singing hymns. The impact of Kirtan washed the dirt off their souls. They pledged to desist from their evil actions.

The deceivers realised that they had been following a wrong path. By the grace of the Guru they were able to follow the path of virtue.

